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NEWS CONFERENCE

#118

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH JODY POWELL

AT 2:15 P.M.

JULY 13, 1977

WEDNESDAY

MR. POWELL: As most of you know, the President and Chancellor Schmidt met for about an hour this morning. They discussed at the beginning of the meeting a general overview East-West relationships.

There was a mutual agreement that it would be beneficial for the Soviet Union to become more involved in multi-national activities.

A specific example cited was the statement coming from the Downing Street summit earlier this year, expressing hope for discussions with the Soviet Union in the North-South area.

The subject of Belgrade came up. There was very strong agreement that progress to this point was satisfying to both governments.

The President stated that it was our intention that the discussions be balanced in the sense of dealing with all aspects of the agreement, not focusing on any particular one; that there was no desire on our part to single out any aspect of the treaty or any nation, and certainly no inclination on our part to try to embarrass anyone; that it was our desire that these discussions be fruitful and productive and there not be any sort of forum for polemics.

I believe it is correct to say that the Chancellor agreed with those sentiments. And the President also mentioned that he hoped that one of the things that -- one of the benefits that would flow from a productive discussion would be progress, further progress on the reunification of families.

The Chancellor reviewed for the President his discussions with Eastern European leaders. He also asked that Mr. Genscher discuss or review his meeting last month with Brezhnev. There was a discussion of the situation in the Middle East. The President characterized his view of the situation in the same terms which he did publicly to you yesterday in the hopes that progress could be made.

The Chancellor conveyed, on behalf of himself

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